

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 088388

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, JO, US, IS

SUBJECT: MAQARIN DAM CONSULTATIONS - NEXT STEPS

REFS: (A) AMMAN 2080 NOTAL, (B) STATE 77034,
(C) AMMAN 1986, (D) STATE 72072

1. AS PREFIGURED IN REFTELS, OUR NEXT STEP IN MAQARIN DAM
CONSULTATIONS PROCESS SHOULD BE TO MEET AGAIN WITH THE
ISRAELIS TO OBTAIN THEIR FORMAL RESPONSE, ON BOTH
TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL LEVELS, TO JORDANIAN COMMENTS/
QUESTIONS ON FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN EARLIER EXPRESSED BY
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THE ISRAELIS RE MAQARIN PROJECT. WE WOULD HOPE THAT, AS
RESULT OF THIS MEETING, UNDERSTANDINGS COULD BE REACHED
BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL ON OUTSTANDING MAQARIN ISSUES,
OR AT LEAST ON HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH THEM IN FUTURE, SO
AS TO FACILITATE USG DECISION TO PROCEED WITH FINANCING
OF FINAL ENGINEERING STUDY FOR THE PROJECT.

2. IN VIEW OF KING HUSSEIN'S POSITIVE ATTITUDE REPORTED REFTEL A, WE CONCUR IN EMBASSY AMMAN'S PROPOSAL (REF C) THAT EMBOFFS WALKER AND PEARSON JOIN TAUBENBLATT IN NEXT ROUND OF TALKS IN ISRAEL.

3. ON APRIL 13, AID/W DISCUSSED WITH HARZA LATTER'S ESTIMATED TIMING RE AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT FINAL FEASIBILITY STUDY ON MAQARIN DAM PROJECT AND LEARNED THAT IT WILL NOT BE READY BEFORE APRIL 29, DELAY FROM APRIL 21 TO 29 BASED ON OMAR ABDULLAH'S RECENT REQUEST (STATE 79729) THAT HARZA CONSIDER DAM HEIGHT OPTION AT 150 METERS (AS OPPOSED TO 140 METERS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED). SINCE THIS DRAFT STUDY COULD THEREFORE NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE TO GOI UNTIL END OF FIRST WEEK IN MAY, WE THINK IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO SCHEDULE OUR NEXT MEETING WITH THE ISRAELIS DURING LATTER PART OF MAY. THIS WILL ENSURE ADEQUATE TIME FOR ALL PARTIES CONCERNED TO ASSESS TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF MAQARIN PROJECT FULLY AND FACILITATE COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION OF TECHNICAL DATA AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS AT OUR NEXT MEETING WITH THE ISRAELIS. IT WOULD ALSO BE IN LINE WITH KANTOR'S SUGGESTION DURING MARCH 25 WASHINGTON MEETING (PARA 5 REF D) THAT GOI WOULD WANT TIME TO REVIEW HARZA'S DRAFT FINAL REPORT BEFORE PROVIDING US A FORMAL RESPONSE. (WE ALSO SEE MERIT IN HOLDING THE MEETING AFTER RPT AFTER THE MAY 17 ISRAELI ELECTIONS.)

4. IF, ON OTHER HAND, GOI SHOULD PREFER TO MEET WITH US TO DISCUSS MAQARIN PROJECT IN EARLY MAY, TAUBENBLATT --
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WHO WILL BE VISITING ROMANIA AT END OF APRIL -- COULD ARRANGE TO VISIT ISRAEL FIRST WEEK IN MAY. ASSUME WALKER AND PEARSON COULD JOIN HIM AT THAT TIME, IF NEED BE.

5. FOR TEL AVIV: REQUEST YOU DISCUSS FOREGOING WITH MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL MOSHE ALLON AND ADVISE WHAT DATES THE ISRAELIS PREFER FOR OUR NEXT MEETING TO DISCUSS MAQARIN PROJECT. YOU SHOULD ALSO STRESS NEED FOR GOI TO CONTINUE TO SAFEGUARD OUR MAQARIN DAM CONSULTATIONS AGAINST LEAKAGE TO THE PRESS.
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